

Samanid Epoch – Golden Era in History of Persian-Tajik People

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Abstract

The Samanid state was formed as an independent state from the Abbasid Caliphate and ruled in Khorasan and Maverennahr (or Transoxiana) in the IX-X centuries. The article deals with the advancement and achievements of society in the Samanid period.

Keywords: Samanid Epoch, State, Prosperity, Agriculture, Trade, Craft, Production, Culture, Scientists.

At the beginning of the 9th century, the dynasty Samanid appeared in Maverennahr. The founder of this dynasty was Saman. His grandchildren (Nukh, Ahmad, Yahya, and Ilyas) were entrusted with the administration of the Maverennahr regions. In 875, the caliph Mutazid appointed Nasr ibn Ahmad the governor of Maverennahr. The governing well-known king of this dynasty, Ismail ibn Ahmad created a Samanid state that was independent from the Arab Caliphate. The Samanid state ruled in the IX-X centuries (875-999). It was a centralized and powerful state [1].

Ismail ibn Ahmad (875-907) was the founder of the Samanid state. Abu Ibrahim Ismail ibn Ahmad Somoni was born in 849 in Fergana and died in 907 in Bukhara. Ismail was an outstanding, wise and educated politician, known as the rightful king ("amiri odil"). He was a good-natured Muslim. During his reign, Bukhara became one of the centres of Islam in the East. Ismail ibn Ahmad showed great importance to the ideology of Islam. Emir Ismail Samani declared "Farsi-Dari" the official language of this state.

The Samanid state covered the current territories of Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan most of Uzbekistan, southern Kyrgyzstan, southern Kazakhstan and Pakistan. Ismail Samani erected the Great Mosque, built madrassas, libraries, and shelters for Sufis, and supported the development of architecture. The best scientists, writers, philosophers, astronomers, painters, alchemists and poets were gathered at the palace of Ismail Samani. He changed the heavy tax and confiscated the property of some landowners. Thanks to the strong political regime of Ismail, Maverennahr and the capital Bukhara were protected from the nomadic Turks. He said: "As long as I'm alive, I will be a wall for Bukhara!"

The great historical merit of Ismail Samani and his ancestors is that they created a civilized state of their time. The administration of the Samanid state consisted of 10 departments (Devans). The main department was Devoni Vezir, Mustavfi (financial work), Amid-ul-mulk (diplomatic relations), Sokhib-ushrat

(military), Sokhib-ul-barid (postal works), Mukhtasib (market affairs), Mushtarif (state security and finance), Kazi (legal, law), Mamlakai Khos (discipline) and Waqf (taxes).

The policy of Ismail was continued by his grandson Nasr 2 (914-949), in which Samanid reached their greatest prosperity. The head of the Samanid state was the emir (king), and regions were governed by the rulers appointed by the king [2].

The Samanid state was a feudal state and workers were exploited in it. High taxes and feudal oppression worsened the life of the working class. As a result, popular dissatisfaction and revolt, appeared the Karmat religious movement appeared. The Karmatians were against the feudal system. The Karmat movement spread in Central Asia at the beginning of X century. Many famous people accepted the Karmatian teaching, including Emir Nasr 2.

The Samanid state defended the interests of large landowners and tradespeople. The land was the main wealth of society. The land was the property of the Samanid dynasty and the upper classes (rulers, military commanders, and clergy). The populations of Movarennahr and Khurasan mainly worked in agriculture. Artificial irrigation was used widely in agriculture. The Vakhsh, Zeravshan and Kofarnikhon rivers provided water to many lands. During this period, developed seed or grain growing, cotton growing, silkworm breeding, animal breeding (sheep, camels, horses) and others. The people also were busied with apiculture. In the IX-X centuries developed processing of minerals too [3].

There was a source of silver in Khujand, a salt in Asht, gold, silver, lapis lazuli and ruby in the Pamir's mountains, an iron in Istaravshan and a coal in Isfara. All the bowels of the earth were used in production. Archaeological finds show that in the 9th-10th centuries, the mining industry was highly advanced, which surprised modern geologists.

During this time craft also moves forward. High-quality silk and cotton fabrics were produced in Samarkand and Bukhara. Vegetable oil and flour were produced. Samarkand became the centre of paper production and provided paper in all countries of the Caliphate. Samarkand's paper was popular as well in the West. Clay mastery was in the towns and the districts. From the glass were made windows and dishes. Glass dishes were not only in the homes of riches but also in the homes of simple people.

In the Samanid period, towns became centers of trade, and some villages even had their markets. Samarkand was the largest shopping center in Maverannahr. Paikand was a town of traders. In Istaravshan was an arms market, and most of the buyers were foreigners. Traders took away products to steppes and deserts. They sold them to nomads and bought animal products, honey, and sometimes slaves. Nomads during the war took people and imprisoned them after being sold as slaves. Isfijab was a town where slaves were sold. However, in the Samanid epoch, the stamping of slaves (after the Mukanna uprising) came to an end [4].

The Great Silk Road connected the West and the East. This road started from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, passed through Baghdad, Hamadan, Marv, Bukhara, Chach, Samarkand, south of Issyk-Kul Lake in Mongolia and finished in China. The caravans consisted of 100-1000 people, camels and horses. Traders brought all kinds of products from Central Asia. At this time, dinar (gold), dirham (silver) and filis (iron) coins were used in trade. Coins of the Samanid period spread widely and were even found have been in Western countries. In the 10th century, a new trade road was opened with the Kievan Russia state.

The towns of Mavarannahr and Khorasan were advanced. The major towns of the Samanid period were Samarkand, Merv, Nishapur, Herat, Khujand, Balkh, Khulbuk, Khujand, Bunjikat, and Penjikent and they became the largest cultural centres. These towns consisted of three (3) parts: dizh, shakhristan, rabot. Bukhara was the capital of the Samanid state. The Arabs plundered and destroyed it many times. But, during this period, Bukhara again became prosperous and beautiful: there were 11 gates, markets and caravanserais, lovely buildings and palaces, as well as the most beautiful place - Jui Muliyon [5].

The first madrasah was opened here. Bukhara has become one of the outstanding cultural centres of the East. It was the centre of Islam religion in Mavarannahr. Scientists, poets, and artists from many countries gathered in Bukhara where favourable conditions for the development of creative ideas. In Bukhara was located a rich library - "Savan-ul-Hikmat" (Warehouse of Wisdom).

In the IX century, several nationalities and tribes lived in Mavarannahr: Sogdian, Khorezmian, Ferghans, Khorasans, Bactrian-Tokharistan population and Saks. All of them had an ethnic relation and spoke the languages of the Iranian group. In some areas of Takharistan, Chach, and Ferghana lived Turkic-speaking population. In the IX-X centuries, the formation of the Tajik nationality and Persian-Tajik language was completed.

The Tajik language before was called Farsi-Dari. During this period, scientific literature and written poetry were created based on the Farsi-Dari language. The Samanid dynasty developed local traditions, education, native language and literature. This

dynasty was a supporter of scholars and writers. In this direction, excellent role had secretaries (viziers) Abulfazl Bala'mi and Abdullah Jaihuni. In the Samanid period, science reached its highest point. During this time lived 5 scientist-enclopedists of the Persian-Tajik people: Ibn Sina, Aburaikhan Beruni, Abubakr Razi, Muhammad al Khorazmi and Abunasr Farabi.

Muhammad al-Khorazmi (780-850) is a mathematician, astronomer, historian, geographer, founder of the Baghdad Scientific Academy "Baytulkhikma". Al-Khorezmi, author of the famous work "Kitab al-jabr wa-l-mukabala", from the name of which the term "algebra" was derived and he is the founder of the science of algebra. Al-Khorazmi converted the mathematical numbers of the ancient Indians into Arabic numbers. Later on, the Europeans received these numbers from the Arabs. Al-Khorazmi wrote books on mathematics and geography in Arabic and Tajik languages.

Abunasr Muhammad Farabi (873-950) was born on the coast of the Sir Darya River. Farabi was fluent in Greek, Latin and Arabic languages. He spent his life in Bukhara, Baghdad and Damascus. Farabi wrote books on philosophy, medicine, politics, music, ethics, physics and others in Arabic and Tajik. He spread an ancient Greek philosophy in the East. Therefore, Farabi was named the "second teacher" after Aristotle. He knew many languages.

Abu Ali ibn Sina (970-1037) was born in the village of Afshana, Bukhara. In Europe his known as Avicenna. He spent his life in the towns of Central Asia, Khorasan and the Abbasid Caliphate. Ibn Sina has written over 500 books in spheres of science and literature, in Arabic and Tajik languages. His book "Al-Konunfit-tib" (Laws of Medicine, of 5 volumes) was used for 1000 years and is still used in the sphere of world medicine. His book, Kitab-al-Shifo (The Book of Healing), was written in philosophy, logic, mathematics, nature, metaphysics and others.

Aburaikhan Biruni (973-1048) was born in Khorezm. He was the leader of the Ma'mun Academy in Gurgenj, Khorezm. He continued his activity in Rey, Gurgan, and Ghazna. Biruni wrote more than 150 books on philosophy, mathematics, geometry, geography, biology, mineralogy, and astronomy. Beruni is the inventor of globe.

Abubakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi (865-935) is a Persian-Tajik philosopher and medical scientist. He wrote more than 170 works in different spheres of science. Razi called the Greeks "wise people" and followed in medicine to Hippocrates and Galen, in philosophy Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Razi said: "Who is immoral (lustful) is worse than an animal. Intellect and knowledge protect man from animal nature".

In the Samanid epoch lived also many well-known scientists such as Ibn Kutayba, author of the book "Kitab al-Maorif", Abu Bakr Narshahi author of "History of Bukhara", Abulmayyad Balkhi author of "Ajoib ul-buldon" and other books were written in Persian language. In this period, lived scientists, mathematicians - Sarahsi and Marvasi, astronomers - Kashiri Fargoni and Sagoni (teacher of Biruni), Sajizi, Abumahmud Khujandi, geographers - Yakub Kindi, Ibn Khurdodbeh, Sahli Balkhi, chemists and physicians - Jabir ibn Khayyon, Hakim Maysari, Hiravi, Akhovaini, historians - Abubakr Narshahi, Ibn Kuteyba, Taifuri, vizier Abulfazl Balami, philosopher, geographer, astronomer and vizier Abdullah Jaihuni.

In the Samanid period, lived more than 100 poets of the Persian-Tajik people, like as Rudaki, Firdavsi, Dakiki, Robiya Balkhi, Shahidi Balkhi, Abushakuri Balkhi and others. Due to the creation of these poets greatly developed literature, especially written poetry. Most poets were musicians. The first melodies of Shashmakam appeared in the era of the Samanid.

Abulkasim Firdavsi (932-1020) is a famous Persian-Tajik poet and thinker. He wrote the poem "Shah Name" (a book about kings) for more than 30 years. This book consists of 60 thousand couplets of a poem. It talks about 50 Arian kings. "Shah Name" is a great literature, historical and ethical book.

Abu Abdullah Rudaki (858-941) is the founder of Persian-Tajik literature, poet, thinker and scientist. He was born in the village of Panjrud. To our time, keeps two thousand lines of poetry Rudaki. He served in the palace of King Nasr ibn Ahmad Samani (913-943 years). Rudaki wrote more than 1 million couplets of poems. More than 1.100 poems of Rudaki preserved till our time. The scientists and thinkers of the Samanid period left a scientific heritage which had global importance till now.

Thus, in the Samanid era, all spheres of material and spiritual culture flourished. Culture has reached the highest point of development - civilization; people lived in peace relative to previous times. The Samanid period is called the "golden age",

because in this time advanced all areas of society. The making of the Tajik nation, which began in the III-IV centuries BC, was ending in the IX-X centuries. Consequently, the Persian-Tajik people had acquired a territory, language, economy and national culture. All the achievements of this period are connected with the Samanid dynasty, especially with the name of King Ismail Samani who was a protector of the creative people.

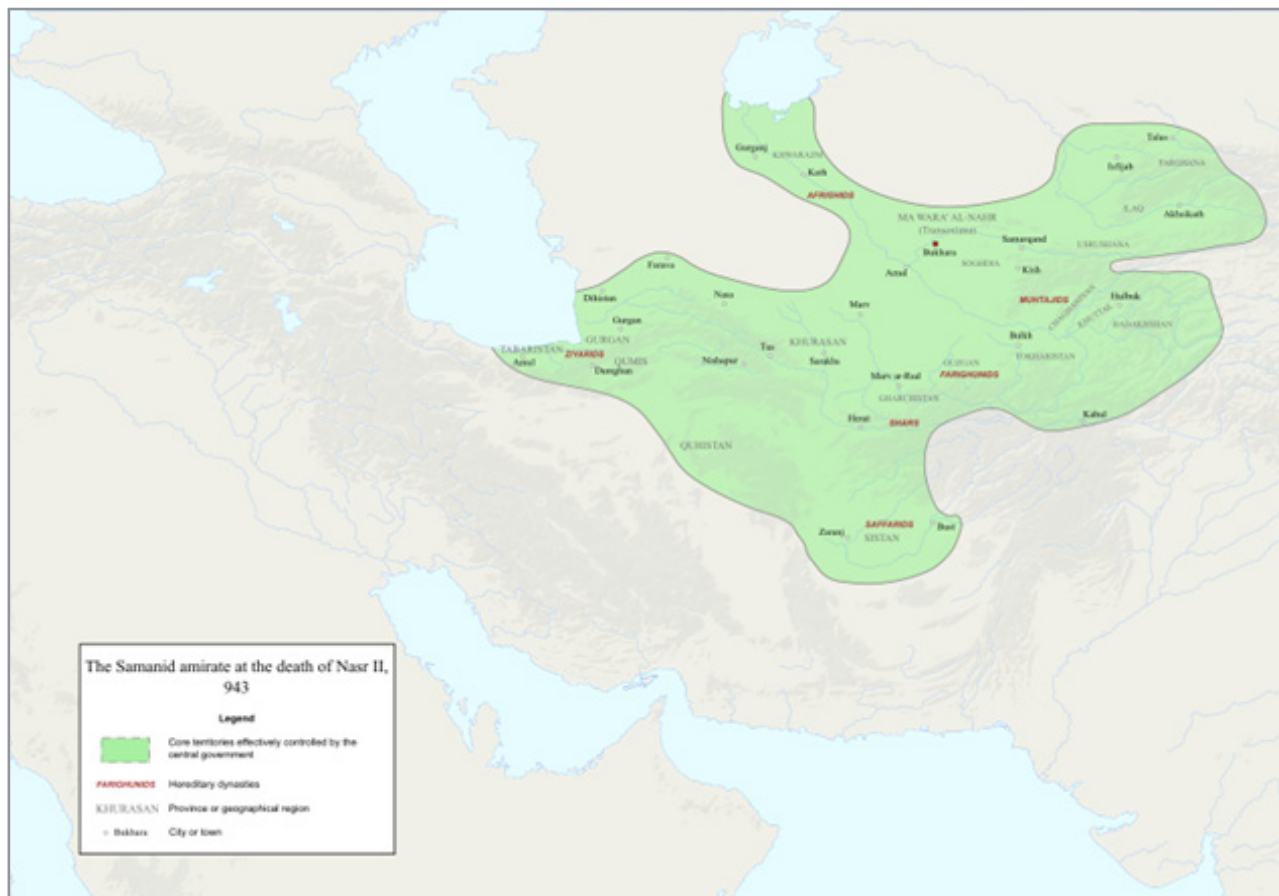
The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in September 1999 year grandiosely celebrated the 1100th anniversary of the Samanid state. In this celebration, in the center of Dushanbe was created a monument to Ismail ibn Ahmad, the founder of the Samanid state.

Kings of dynasty Samanid:

- Nuh ibn Saman (819-842)
- Ahmad ibn Asad (842-864)
- Nasr 1 ibn Ahmad (864-875)
- Ismail ibn Ahmad (874-892; 892-907)
- Ahmad ibn Ismail (907-914)
- Nasr 2 ibn Ahmad (914-943)
- Nuh 1 ibn Nasr 2 (943-954)
- Abdumalik ibn Nuh 1 (954-961)
- Mansuri 1 ibn Nuh 1 (961-976)
- Nuh 2 ibn Mansuri 1 (976-997)
- Mansuri 2 ibn Nuh 2 (997-999)
- Abdumalik ibn Nuh 2 (999)



Monument of Ismail Samani, Dushanbe city



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